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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF BAGHDAD'S FALL,
ISRAEL P.O.W. NEGOTIATIONS, MAGHREB TERRORISM AND IRAQ

SUMMARY: "Al Watan" laments the "continuous death" in the four years since the fall of Baghdad; "Oman" blames Israel for the stall in P.O.W negotiations with the Palestinians; "Oman" states that the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan are "increasing terrorism" by "spreading fanatical thinking that rejects dialogue and embraces violence as the only means to achieving its goals." END SUMMARY.

COVERAGE

12. This week's state visit by the president of Belarus dominated coverage on all front pages of dailies. English-language dailies reported the shooting spree at Virginia Tech University, but as of April 17, the Arabic-language press did not.

BLOCK QUOTES: "CONTINUOUS DEATH" IN IRAQ

13. On April 11, privately owned daily "Al-Watan" (circulation 42,000) highlighted the fourth anniversary of Baghdad's fall, saying, "An Oppressive Ruler Is Better than Persistent Misery:"

"The Iraqis have experienced four years of continuous death that is haunting their lives without exception and without accomplishing any of the many goals of the American and British invasion. There were many false pretenses behind the invasion, from claiming the existence of weapons of mass destruction (there was no proof of these weapons or their link to terrorism), to promoting democracy, to maintaining Iraqis' 'well-being.' Iraqis stand in surprise today, wondering what to expect next. The invaders are achieving their one underlying war goal of controlling the source of oil and preserving its related facilities -- ports, ministry buildings, and refineries. Iraqis now have the right to ask again: what next, and until when? Until when will death continue to move towards them, while their resources are moving in the opposite direction out of the country?"

ISRAELI P.O.W. NEGOTIATIONS

14. On April 12, government-owned daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) published an editorial entitled, "Arab Efforts and Israeli Rejection":

"The Palestinian president enunciated his hope to end the P.O.W. negotiations in a positive way, ensuring that the Israeli soldier's release is contingent upon the release of Palestinian prisoners. But the [Palestinians'] diplomatic efforts have clashed with Israel's rejection, as it refuses any peaceful solution to its issues with the Palestinian Authority. What confirms Israel's lack of seriousness...is the defense minister's announcement that there are limits to the negotiations... Israel is proving that it is the main obstacle to the P.O.W. exchange and to the end of suffering for several long-imprisoned Palestinians."

MAGHREB TERRORISM AND IRAQ

15. On April 13, "Oman" published an editorial entitled, "Curbing Terrorism's Roots Is a Basic Step":

"The pace of violence and terrorist actions has increased in many countries like Morocco and Algeria through bombings that have shaken security and taken many innocent lives. The call to solve this phenomenon and its causes is a right step towards eradicating this disease from the world forever. What is happening in Afghanistan and Iraq...increases terrorism...through spreading fanatical thinking that rejects dialogue and embraces violence as the only means to achieving its goals. [This fanatical thinking] is false, creating more suffering and chaos in otherwise secure societies."

GRAPPO